

# PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the  
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

To:

see form PCT/ISA/220

PCT

## WRITTEN OPINION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY (PCT Rule 43bis.1)

		Date of mailing (day/month/year) see form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet)
Applicant's or agent's file reference see form PCT/ISA/220		<b>FOR FURTHER ACTION</b> See paragraph 2 below
International application No. PCT/GB2004/001491	International filing date (day/month/year) 05.04.2004	Priority date (day/month/year) 07.04.2003
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC B23K20/12, B21D26/02		
Applicant LUXFER GROUP LIMITED		

1. This opinion contains indications relating to the following items:

- Box No. I Basis of the opinion
- Box No. II Priority
- Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention
- Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43bis.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- Box No. VI Certain documents cited
- Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application
- Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application

2. **FURTHER ACTION**

If a demand for international preliminary examination is made, this opinion will usually be considered to be a written opinion of the International Preliminary Examining Authority ("IPEA"). However, this does not apply where the applicant chooses an Authority other than this one to be the IPEA and the chosen IPEA has notified the International Bureau under Rule 66.1bis(b) that written opinions of this International Searching Authority will not be so considered.

If this opinion is, as provided above, considered to be a written opinion of the IPEA, the applicant is invited to submit to the IPEA a written reply together, where appropriate, with amendments, before the expiration of three months from the date of mailing of Form PCT/ISA/220 or before the expiration of 22 months from the priority date, whichever expires later.

For further options, see Form PCT/ISA/220.

3. For further details, see notes to Form PCT/ISA/220.

Name and mailing address of the ISA:   European Patent Office - P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL-2280 HV Rijswijk - Pays Bas Tel. +31 70 340 - 2040 Tx: 31 651 epo nl Fax: +31 70 340 - 3016	Authorized Officer  Jaeger, H Telephone No. +31 70 340-4571	
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**Box No. I Basis of the opinion**

1. With regard to the language, this opinion has been established on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.  
 This opinion has been established on the basis of a translation from the original language into the following language \_\_\_\_\_, which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rules 12.3 and 23.1(b)).
2. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application and necessary to the claimed invention, this opinion has been established on the basis of:
  - a. type of material:  
 a sequence listing  
 table(s) related to the sequence listing
  - b. format of material:  
 in written format  
 in computer readable form
  - c. time of filing/furnishing:  
 contained in the international application as filed.  
 filed together with the international application in computer readable form.  
 furnished subsequently to this Authority for the purposes of search.
3.  In addition, in the case that more than one version or copy of a sequence listing and/or table relating thereto has been filed or furnished, the required statements that the information in the subsequent or additional copies is identical to that in the application as filed or does not go beyond the application as filed, as appropriate, were furnished.
4. Additional comments:

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**Box No. II Priority**

1.  The following document has not been furnished:

- copy of the earlier application whose priority has been claimed (Rule 43bis.1 and 66.7(a)).
- translation of the earlier application whose priority has been claimed (Rule 43bis.1 and 66.7(b)).

Consequently it has not been possible to consider the validity of the priority claim. This opinion has nevertheless been established on the assumption that the relevant date is the claimed priority date.

2.  This opinion has been established as if no priority had been claimed due to the fact that the priority claim has been found invalid (Rules 43bis.1 and 64.1). Thus for the purposes of this opinion, the international filing date indicated above is considered to be the relevant date.

3. Additional observations, if necessary:

**Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43bis.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or  
Industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims	4,18-20,28
	No: Claims	1-3,5-17,21-27
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims	
	No: Claims	1-28
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims	1-28
	No: Claims	

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

**Re Item V.**

1. The following documents are referred to in this communication:  
D1 : EP-1-245-325 A (BOEING CO) 2 October 2002 (2002-10-02)  
D2 : WO 02/070186 A (HAMA YASUYUKI ; AKIYAMA HIROSHI (JP); NARITA MASAYUKI (JP); HASHIMOTO) 12 September 2002 (2002-09-12)  
D3 : PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 1999, no. 05, 31 May 1999 (1999-05-31) & JP 11 047859 A (MITSUBISHI HEAVY IND LTD), 23 February 1999 (1999-02-23)

**2 INDEPENDENT CLAIM 1**

- 2.1 The present application does not meet the criteria of Article 33(1) PCT, because the subject-matter of claim 1 is not new in the sense of Article 33(2) PCT.  
Document D1 discloses (the references in parenthesis applying to this document):

A method of preparing a blank (30) for superplastic forming, said method comprising the steps of joining at least one insert (23c) to a parent body (23a, 23b) by means of friction stir welding, at least one of the parent body and the insert or inserts being made of a material which has superplastic properties.

Therefore D1 discloses all the features of claim 1. Both D2 and D3 also disclose all the features of this claim.

**3 INDEPENDENT CLAIM 14**

- 3.1 The present application does not meet the criteria of Article 33(1) PCT, because the subject-matter of claim 14 is not new in the sense of Article 33(2) PCT.  
Document D1 discloses (the references in parenthesis applying to this document):

A blank (30) for use in a superplastic forming process, said blank comprising a parent body (23a, 23b) and an insert (23c) joined thereto by means of friction stir welding, at least one of the parent body and the insert being made of a material which has superplastic properties.

Therefore D1 discloses all the features of claim 14. Both D2 and D3 also disclose

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all the features of this claim.

**4 DEPENDENT CLAIMS 2-13, 15-28**

Dependent claims 2-13, 15-28 do not contain any features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, meet the requirements of the PCT in respect of novelty and/or inventive step (Article 33(2) and (3) PCT).

**4.1 Novelty**

Documents D1, D2 or D3 also disclose all the features of claims 2, 3, 5-13, 15-17 and 21-27.

**4.2 Inventive Step**

In claims 4, 18-20 and 28 slight constructional changes in the blank of claim 14 or the method of preparing a blank of claim 1 are defined which come within the scope of the customary practice followed by persons skilled in the art, especially as the advantages thus achieved can readily be foreseen. Consequently, the subject-matter of these claims lacks an inventive step.